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Raja Raja Chola I
Construction Of Brihadeeswarar Temple

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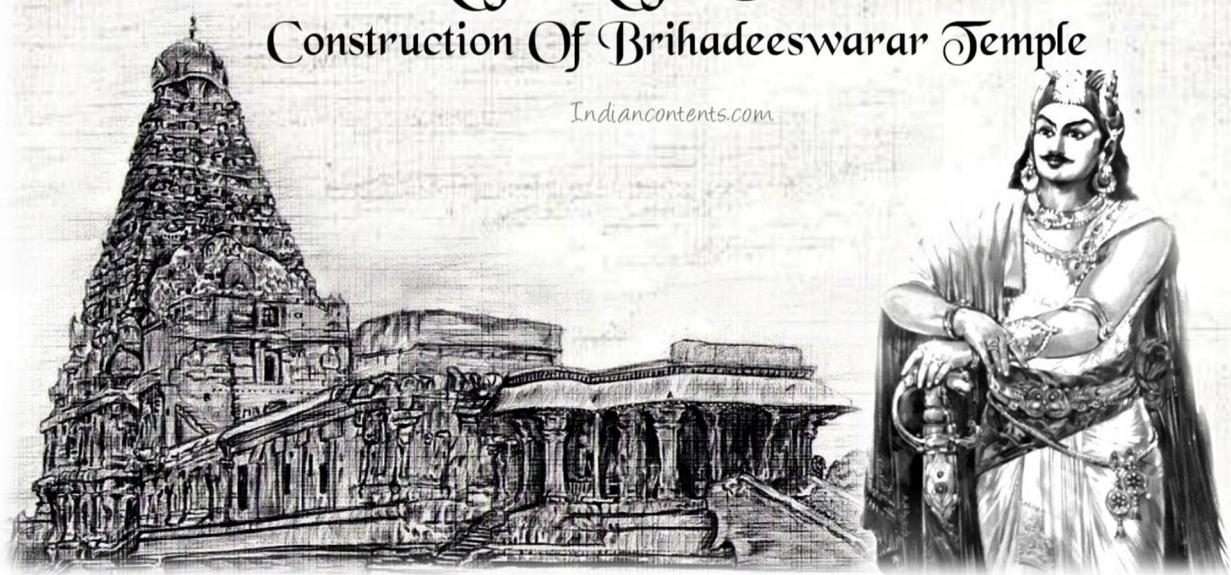
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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brihadisvara_Temple

Brihadisvara Temple

தஞ்சைப் பெருவுடையார் கோயில்

Brihadishvara Temple complex

Religion	
Affiliation	Hinduism
District	Thanjavur district

Deity	Shiva
Festivals	Maha Shivaratri
Location	
Location	Thanjavur
State	Tamil Nadu
Country	India

Location in Tamil Nadu, India
Show map of IndiaShow map of Tamil NaduShow all

Geographic coordinates	10°46′58″N 79°07′54″E
Architecture	
Style	Chola architecture
Creator	Rajaraja I
Completed	1010 CE[1][2]
Inscriptions	Tamil
Elevation	66 m (217 ft)
UNESCO World Heritage Site	
Official name	The Brihadisvara Temple complex, Thanjavur
Part of	Great Living Chola Temples
Criteria	Cultural: (ii), (iii)
Reference	250bis-001
Inscription	1987 (11th Session)
Extensions	2004
Area	18.07 ha (44.7 acres)
Buffer zone	9.58 ha (23.7 acres)

Brihadishvara Temple, called **Rajarajesvaram** (lit. 'Lord of Rajaraja') by its builder, and known locally as *Thanjai Periya Kovil* (lit. 'Thanjavur Big Temple') and *Peruvudaiyar Kovil*, is a Shaivite Hindu temple built in a Chola architectural style located on the south bank of the Cauvery river in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, India. It is one of the largest Hindu temples and an exemplar of Tamil architecture. It is also called *Dakshina Meru* (Meru of the South). Built by Chola emperor Rajaraja I between 1003 and 1010 CE, the temple is a part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site known as the "Great Living Chola Temples", along with the Chola-era Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple and Airavatesvara temple, which are about 70 kilometres (43 mi) and 40 kilometres (25 mi) to its northeast respectively.

The original monuments of this 11th-century temple were built around a moat. It included *gopura*, the main temple, its massive tower, inscriptions, frescoes, and sculptures predominantly related to Shaivism, but also of Vaishnavism and Shaktism. The temple was damaged in its history and some artwork is now missing. Additional mandapam and monuments were added in the centuries that followed. The temple now stands amidst fortified walls that were added after the 16th century.

Built using granite, the *vimana* tower above the shrine is one of the tallest in South India. The temple has a massive colonnaded *prakara* (corridor) and one of the largest Shiva lingas in India. It is also famed for the quality of its sculpture, as well as being the location that commissioned the brass Nataraja, Shiva as the lord of dance, in the 11th century. The complex includes shrines for Nandi, Parvati, Murugan, Ganesha, Sabhapati, Dakshinamurti, Chandeshvara, Varahi, Thiyagarajar of Thiruvarur, Siddhar Karuvoorar and others. The temple is one of the most visited tourist attractions in Tamil Nadu.

Nomenclature

Rajaraja Chola, who commissioned the temple, called it Rajarajeshvaram (Rajarājeśvaram), literally "the temple of the god of Rajaraja".A later inscription in the Brihannayaki shrine calls the temple's deity Periya Udaiya Nayanar, which appears to be the source of the modern names Brihadisvara and Peruvudaiyar Kovil.

Location

The Peruvudaiyar Temple is located in the city of Thanjavur, about 350 kilometres (220 mi) southwest of Chennai. The city is connected daily to other major cities by the network of Indian Railways, Tamil Nadu bus services and the National Highways 67, 45C, 226 and 226 Extn. The nearest airport with regular services is Tiruchirappalli International Airport (IATA: TRZ), about 55 kilometres (34 mi) away.

The city and the temple though inland, are at the start of the Kaveri River delta, thus with access to the Bay of Bengal and through it to the Indian Ocean. Along with the temples, the Tamil people completed the first major irrigation network in the 11th century for agriculture, for movement of goods and to control the water flow through the urban center.

History

Statue of Chola emperor Rajaraja I, who built the temple over 1003–1010 CE

A spectrum of dravidian temple styles continued to develop from the fifth to the ninth century over the Chalukya era rule as evidenced in Aihole, Badami and Pattadakal, and then with the Pallava era as witnessed at Mamallapuram and other monuments. Thereafter, between 850 and 1280, Cholas emerged as the dominant dynasty. The early Chola period saw a greater emphasis on securing their geopolitical boundaries and less emphasis on architecture. In the tenth century, within the Chola empire emerged features such as the multifaceted columns with projecting square capitals. This, states George Michell, signalled the start of the new Chola style. This South Indian style is most fully realized both in scale and detail in the Brihadeshwara temple built between 1003 and 1010 by the Chola king Rajaraja I.

Additions, renovations and repairs

The main temple along with its gopurams is from the early 11th century. The temple also saw additions, renovations, and repairs over the next 1,000 years. The raids and wars, particularly between Muslim Sultans who controlled Madurai and Hindu kings who controlled Thanjavur caused damage. These were repaired by Hindu dynasties that regained control. In some cases, the rulers attempted to renovate the temple with faded paintings, by ordering new murals on top of the older ones. In other cases, they sponsored the addition of shrines. The significant shrines of Kartikeya (Murugan), Parvati (Amman) and Nandi are from the 16th and 17th-century Nayaka era. Similarly the Dakshinamurti shrine was built later. It was well maintained by Marathas of Thanjavur.

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Rajaraja I

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajaraja_I

Rajaraja I
Rājakēsari Varman, Ponniyin Selvan, Mum'muṭi Cōḻan,[1] *Sivapathasekaran, Thirumurai Kanda Cholan,* Taila *Kula Kaalan, Thelungu kula kaalan, Pandiya Kula Sani, Keralandhagan, Singalandhagan,* Kṣatriya *Śikhāmaṇi*
A Mural of Rajaraja I at Brihadisvara Temple
Chola Emperor

Reign	June/July 985–January or February 1014
Predecessor	Uttama

Successor	Rajendra I
King of Anuradhapura	
Reign	c. 992 – c. January/February 1014
Predecessor	Mahinda V
Successor	Rajendra I
Born	Arul Mozhi Varman 947 Thanjavur, Chola Empire (modern-day Tamil Nadu, India)
Died	January 1014 (aged 66)[2] Thanjavur, Chola Empire
Spouse	• Thiripuvana Madeviyar • Lokamahadevi • Cholamahadevi • Tirilokyamahadevi • Panchavanmahadevi • Abhimanavalli • Latamahadevi • Prithivimahadevi
Issue	• Rajendra I • Araiyan Rajarajan • Arulmozhi chandramalli alias Gangamadevi • Mathevadigal
Regnal name	
	Raja Raja Chola
Dynasty	Chola
Father	Parantaka II
Mother	Vanavan Mahadevi
Religion	Hinduism *See details*
Signature	

Rajaraja I (Middle Tamil: *Rājarāja Cōḻaṉ*; Classical Sanskrit: *Rājarāja Śōḷa*; 3 November 947 – January/February 1014), also known as **Rajaraja the Great**, was a Chola emperor who reigned from 985 CE to 1014 CE. He is known for his conquests of southern India and parts of Sri Lanka, and increasing Chola influence across the Indian Ocean. Rajaraja's birth name was Arulmozhi Varman.

Rajaraja's empire encompassed vast territories, including regions of the Pandya country, the Chera country, and northern Sri Lanka. He also

extended his influence over strategic islands such as Lakshadweep, Thiladhunmadulu atoll, and parts of the Maldives in the Indian Ocean. His conquests weren't limited to the south; he also launched successful campaigns against the Western Gangas and the Western Chalukyas, extending Chola authority as far as the Tungabhadra River. In the east, Rajaraja faced fierce opposition from the Telugu Chola king Jata Choda Bhima over control of Vengi. This region held significant strategic importance due to its access to resources and trade routes. The conflict between the two rulers intensified as they vied for dominance in the region, resulting in significant battles and shifting allegiances.[7][8][9][10]

Rajaraja I also left a significant mark through his architectural and cultural achievements. He commissioned the construction of the Rajarajeshwaram Temple in the Chola capital of Thanjavur, which is revered as one of the most prominent examples of medieval South Indian architectural style. Additionally, during his reign, important Tamil literary works by poets such as Appar, Sambandar, and Sundarar were gathered and compiled into a single collection known as the Thirumurai. This earned him the title of 'Thirumurai Kanda Cholar,' meaning The One Who Found Thirumurai.[8][12] He initiated a project of land survey and assessment in 1000 CE which led to the reorganisation of Tamil country into individual units known as *valanadus*. Rajaraja died in 1014 CE, and was succeeded by his son Rajendra Chola I.

Early life

Rajaraja was the son of Chola King Parantaka II, also known as Sundara Chola, and Queen Vanavan Mahadevi. As recorded in the Thiruvalangadu copper-plate inscription, his birth name was Arun Mozhi Varman, meaning "The Word of Sun Clan." He was born around 947 CE during the Tamil month of Aipassi, under the Sadhayam star. The Government of Tamil Nadu recognizes his birthdate as 3 November 947. Rajaraja had an elder brother, Aditha II, and an elder sister, Kundavai.

Rajaraja's accession marked the end of a period of competing claims to the Chola throne, following his great-grandfather Parantaka I's reign. After Parantaka I, his elder son Gandaraditya became king. However, upon Gandaraditya's death, his son Madhurantakan was still a minor, so the throne passed to Parantaka I's younger son, Arinjaya. Arinjaya soon died, and his son Parantaka II (Sundara Chola) succeeded him. It was decided that Sundara Chola would be succeeded by Madhurantakan, likely due to Sundara's preference. However, according to the Thiruvalangadu inscription

of Rajaraja's son, Rajendra I, the succession plan may have been made by Rajaraja himself.

Aditha II died under mysterious circumstances, with inscriptions suggesting he may have been assassinated. Shortly afterward, Sundara Chola also passed away, enabling Madhurantakan to assume the throne with the title Uttama Chola. Following Uttama Chola's death, Rajaraja ascended the throne in mid-985. He was known as Arulmoḷi Varman until this point, after which he adopted the regnal name Rajaraja, meaning "King among Kings."

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How Rajaraja Chola became the

World's Richest King

ANIRUDH KANISETTI

16 January, 2025 09:05 am IST

A statue of Chola King Rajaraja

𝕿he Brihadishvara Temple at Thanjavur is still one of the most stupendous monuments ever built in India. While often seen primarily as a religious monument, its inscriptions also reveal a Chola court of spectacular opulence, capable of gifting literal tonnes of gold and silver, thousands of animals, and tens of thousands of pearls. Sometimes we hand-wave the question of how medieval Indian kings obtained such vast riches. But in the figure of Rajaraja Chola – perhaps the most remarkable ruler of the period – we have some interesting, and counterintuitive, answers.

The Cholas and their world

In the late 10th century, the political situation in South Asia was dismal. Just a few decades prior, great transregional imperial formations – the Rashtrakutas, Palas and Pratiharas – had lorded it over the subcontinent before being shattered by various internal forces. This left India divided among many small regional kingdoms.

One of these was the Chola kingdom, which at the time was led by a dowager queen, Sembiyan Mahadevi – one of the most formidable figures in Indian religious history, who deserves a future column of her own. Sembiyan and her son, King Uttama Chola, did not move to exploit the broader political situation, instead strengthening the Cholas' position at home. They built alliances with the Tamil gentry through temple patronage. An interesting example of this comes from the 970s when Uttama went to Kanchipuram in northern Tamil Nadu. His court made administrative arrangements at the Ulagalanda Perumal temple, one of the city's many Vishnu shrines.

Uttama ordered that new immigrants to the city were to give a monthly quota of oil and rice to the temple. Weaver communities, who traditionally received interest-bearing loans from the temple, were appointed temple managers to audit these immigrants' dues. Finally, the chief of Kanchi's merchant assembly was given the lucrative honour of administering the temple accounts on behalf of the Cholas. All these made Chola temples not just devotional centres but also economic and political centres, where capital could be accrued, directed to businesses, and used to build relationships with important constituents.

The rise of Rajaraja Chola

Rajaraja Chola was Uttama's successor, though – for reasons too complex to get into here – the two did not share the best relationship. What we can

say for sure is that Rajaraja did not continue Uttama's sedate foreign policy. At his accession, the upper Tamil plain finally possessed the mix of factors – internal cohesion and external disarray – to turn the tables on all its neighbours. And this Rajaraja did with violent efficiency, leading expeditions to the Malabar Coast, Sri Lanka, and southern Karnataka.

What really sets Rajaraja apart is what he did after these expeditions. Most medieval Indian kings would simply demand tribute, vassalise foreign rulers, and return home. It was just too difficult, logistically, to administer conquered territory. But Rajaraja broke the mould: in south Karnataka, he renamed Talakkad, an old regional centre, "Rajaraja-puram"—Rajaraja City; in Lanka, after taking control of the town of Polonnaruwa, he renamed it "Jananathapuram", People's Leader City. These would hereafter serve as Chola centres. Rajaraja was able to do this with confidence because he had the support of Tamil merchant assemblies, who migrated to both regions accompanied by professional mercenaries.

It was Tamil merchants who enabled the Chola kingdom to become a Chola Empire. In fact, according to the *Culavamsa*, a Sri Lankan chronicle, it was a Tamil horse merchant who tipped Rajaraja off about the island's political situation, enabling the Chola conquest. And Rajaraja rewarded the merchant assemblies appropriately: as historian Meera Abraham argues in *Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India*, inscriptions suggest they took over pearl fisheries on Lanka's north shore right after.

But paralleling this was Rajaraja's own remarkable administrative prowess. He amplified, by several degrees, the temple patronage policy of his grand-aunt, Sembiyan Mahadevi. After every war, he gifted animals, gold, and jewels at strategically-chosen sacred sites. These gifts were accompanied by eulogies to his martial prowess – turning them, essentially, into medieval political 'advertisements'. This effectively broadcast his charisma into the

Tamil countryside, winning over subjects, recruits and administrators. From the 990s onwards, Rajaraja's court set up new administrative divisions – all bearing his titles, such as *Keralantaka-Valanadu* (roughly 'Kerala-Destroyer Prosperity District'). This created easily the deepest taxation system in all of medieval South Asia.

The fortunes of Rajaraja's temple

With all this in mind, let's return to where we began: Rajaraja's colossal Brihadishvara temple in Thanjavur. Here are the overall numbers, as calculated by historian SR Balasubrahmanyam in *Middle Chola Temples: Rajaraja I to Kulottunga I*. Rajaraja alone gifted 38,604 gold coins. This was more than what most European courts at the time could muster. Then there are the precious corals, pearls and jewels—about 85 in total—that Rajaraja's inscriptions declare were seized from the rival Pandya and Chera dynasties. These were valued at 8,462 coins. Then 155 silver items, similarly seized from the Cheras and Pandyas, worth 48,400 gold coins.

Adding all of these up, Rajaraja *alone* gave away gifts worth 95,466 gold coins: several tonnes of the precious metal. Rajaraja's sister and queens also made gifts of bronze idols, adorned with tens of thousands of Lankan pearls. There is no earlier indication that these ladies had large treasuries of their own; this suggests that their fortunes stemmed from Rajaraja himself. And the ultimate source of this was the seized treasuries of Rajaraja's political rivals.

This, as it were, is merely the tip of the temple-spire. The temple received ghee from 1,623 cows, 2,563 ewes, and 40 buffaloes—about 40 per cent of which were gifted by Rajaraja. Over 5,000 tonnes of rice were brought in annually, mostly from nearby villages but also from conquered territory. Rajaraja's officers and army regiments also made gifts to the temple, and its staff came from across Chola territories, turning it into a political centre for the imperial elite. But all these endowments were not just intended to

conduct rituals: like his uncle Uttama, Rajaraja was also aware of the temple's potential as an economic engine. Its animals were gifted to shepherds, especially in his kingdom's drier regions; in return, the shepherds were to send the temple constant gifts of ghee for its lamps. Gold coins were loaned to Brahmin assemblies in the still-wild lower Kaveri delta, allowing them to clear forests and set up irrigation in return for a neat 12.5 per cent annual interest.

So, what made Rajaraja Chola the richest man on Earth? Military daring; alliances with merchants, smart public relations, and administrative genius. But more than anything else, it was his boundless imagination—his ability to break with the old and create new institutions. As we'll see in next week's column, this ability to imagine was shared by his son and successor, Rajendra – though sometimes with morally difficult consequences.

Anirudh Kanisetti is a public historian. He is the author of 'Lords of Earth and Sea: A History of the Chola Empire', and the award-winning 'Lords of the Deccan'. He hosts the Echoes of India and Yuddha podcasts. He tweets @AKanisetti, and is on Instagram @anirbuddha. Views are personal.

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Chola Conquest of Anuradhapura

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chola_conquest_of_Anuradhapura

Chola Conquest of Anuradhapura

Date	992 AD-1017 AD
Location	Anuradhapura Kingdom
Result	Chola Victory
	• Anuradhapura destroyed by the Chola forces.
	• Plundering of Anuradhapura and the island's treasures.

Territorial changes	• Polonnaruwa made Chola administrative capital in Sri Lanka • Rajarata annexed as a Chola province in 993 A.D • Rest of the Island Annexed as a Chola Province in 1017-1018 A.D	
Belligerents		
🚩 Chola Empire	🏴 Anuradhapura Kingdom • 🛡 Pandyan Allies	
Commanders and leaders		
(992–993 CE) 🚩 Rajaraja Chola I (Emperor)	**(992–993 CE)** 🏴 Mahinda V (POW)	
🚩 Rajendra Chola I (Prince) 🚩 Vallavaraiyan Vandiyadevan (General)	**(1017 CE)** 🏴 Kassapa VI	
(1017 CE) 🚩 Rajendra Chola I (Emperor) 🚩 Sanga Varma Chola (Prince)	**(1042 CE)** 🏴 Kassapa VI † 🛡 Disposed Pandyan Princes †	
(1042 CE) 🚩 Sanga Varma Chola (Chieftain)		
Units involved		
🚩 Chola Navy 🚩 Chola Army	🏴 Anuradhapura Army 🛡 Pandyan Auxiliaries	
Strength		
95,000[4]	Unknown	
Casualties and losses		
Unknown	Many Soldiers and Large number of Sinhalese civilians died	

The **Chola conquest of Anuradhapura** was a military invasion of the Kingdom of Anuradhapura by the Chola Empire. The period of Chola entrenchment in entire Sri Lanka lasted in total about three-quarters of a century, from roughly 993 CE (the date of Rajaraja's first invasion) to 1070 CE, when Vijayabahu I recaptured the north,east and central Sri lanka and expelled the Chola forces restoring Sinhalese sovereignty.

The Chola conquest followed an initial conflict between Chola and the Pandya-Sinhalese alliance during conquest of the Pandya Kingdom by Chola king Parantaka I. After the defeat, Pandya king Rajasimha took his crown and the other regalia and sought refuge in Anuradhapura. The Paranthka made several futile attempts to regain regalia, including

invasion of Sri Lanka on a date between 947 and 949 CE during the reign of Sinhalese king Udaya IV (946–954 CE). One of the driving motives behind the invasions of Anuradhapura by the Cholas' was their desire to possess these royal treasures.

The conquest started with the invasion of the Anuradhapura Kingdom in 993 CE by Rajaraja I when he sent a large Chola army to conquer the kingdom and absorb it into the Chola Empire. Most of the island was subsequently conquered by 1017 CE and incorporated as a province of the vast Chola empire during the reign of his son Rajendra Chola I. The Chola occupation would be overthrown in 1070 CE through a campaign of Sinhalese Resistance led by Prince Kitti, a Sinhalese royal. The Cholas fought many subsequent wars and attempted to reconquer the Sinhalese kingdom as the Sinhalese were allies of their arch-enemies, the Pandyas.

History

Background

Military expeditions from South Indian forces into Anuradhapura had been brief ad hoc up until the mid-tenth century. These were designed to facilitate short-term gains with minimal involvement followed by a withdrawal to the mainland. However, with the ascension of more ambitious and aggressive imperial Chola kings, Rajaraja I (985–1014) and his son Rajendra I (1012–1044), a new strategy of ruthless plunder and destruction of major political and religious centers on the island occurred, followed by the establishment of semi-permanent and fortified encampments, from where wide-ranging raids could be carried out in other parts of the island.[5]

Fall of Anuradhapura
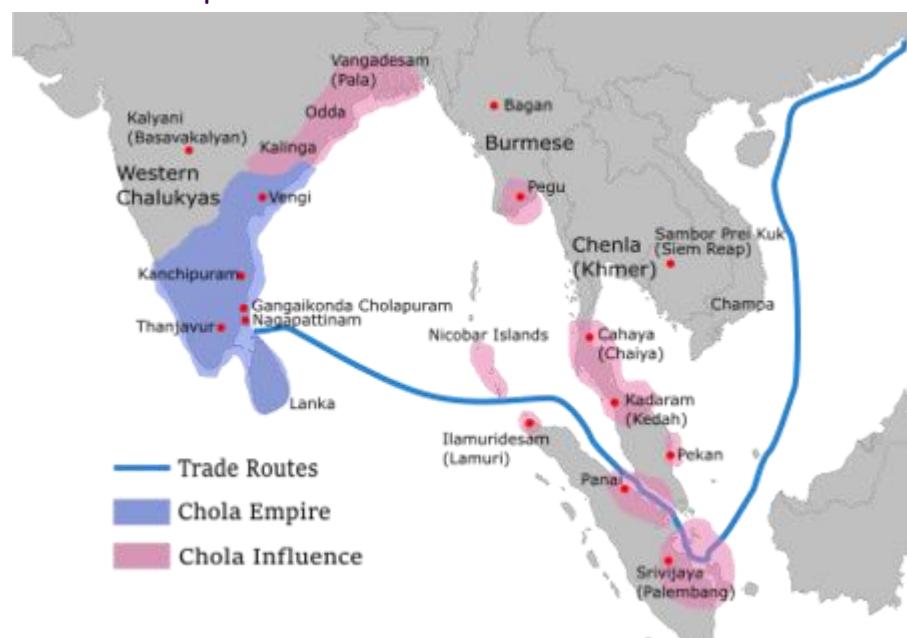
**The Chola dynasty under Rajendra Chola I in 1030 A.D**

The *tirumagal* inscription of Rajaraja I dated to 993 AD first mentions Anuradhapura among the emperor's conquests. Mahinda V (981–1017) distracted by a revolt of his own Tamil mercenary troops fled to the south-eastern province of Rohana. Taking advantage of this internal strife Rajaraja I invaded Anuradhapura sometime in 993 AD and conquered the northern part of the country and incorporated it into his kingdom as a province named "Mummudi-sola-mandalam" after himself. The Culavamsa says that the capital at Anuradhapura was "utterly destroyed in every way by the Chola army. The capital of the conquered Rajarata was moved to Polonnaruwa which was then renamed "Jananathamangalam", a title of Rajaraja. The Chola official Tali Kumaran erected a Shiva temple called Rajarajeshvara ("Lord of Rajaraja") in the town of Mahatirtha (modern Mantota, Mannar), which was renamed Rajaraja-pura. Comparing Rajaraja's campaign to the invasion of Lanka by the legendary hero Rama, the Thiruvalangadu Plates states:

"Rama built with the aid of monkeys, a causeway across the sea, and then with great difficulties defeated the King of Lanka by means of sharp edged arrows. But Rama was excelled by this king whose powerful army crossed the ocean by ships and burnt up the kingdom of Lanka."

— *Thiruvalangadu Copper Plates*

A partial consolidation of Chola power in Rajarata had followed the initial season of plunder. With the intention to transform Chola encampments into more permanent military enclaves, Saivite temples were constructed in Polonnaruwa and in the emporium of Mahatirtha. Taxation was also instituted, especially on merchants and artisans by the Cholas. In 1014 Rajaraja I died and was succeeded by his son Rajendra Chola I, perhaps the most aggressive king of his line. Chola raids were launched southward from Rajarata into Rohana. By his fifth year, Rajendra claimed to have completely conquered the Ceylon and incorporated it into the Chola Empire. As per the Sinhalese chronicle *Mahavamsa*, the conquest of Anuradhapura was completed in the 36th year of the reign of the Sinhalese monarch Mahinda V, i.e. about 1017–18. Rajendra's success was complete and whole of the island became a Chola Province. But the Cholas never really consolidated their control over southern Sri Lanka, which in the case lacked large and prosperous settlements to tempt long-term Chola occupation. According to the Culavamsa and Karandai plates, Rajendra Chola led a large army into Rohana and captured Mahinda's crown, queen, daughter, a vast amount of wealth, and the king himself whom he took as a prisoner to India, where he eventually died in exile in 1029.

Resistance
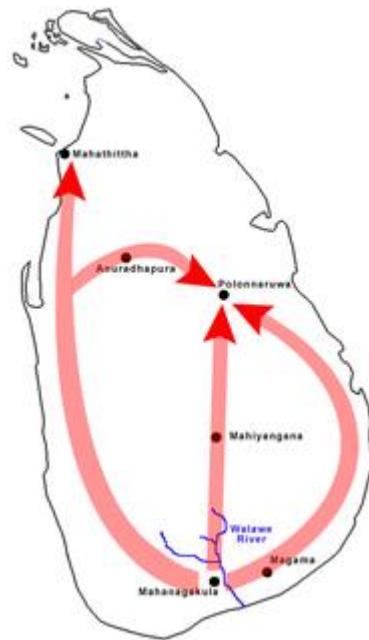
Vijayabahu I sent three armies to attack Polonnaruwa. One was sent along the western shore to Mahatittha and Polonnaruwa, another from the east across Magama, and the third and main force across Mahiyanga.

In 1029, Eleven years after the Chola conquest of Rohana, Prince Kassapa, son of Mahinda, hid in Rohana, where Chola forces vainly searched for him. Soon after the death of his father Kassapa assumed the monarchy as Kassapa VI (also known as Vikramabahu) and "ruled" in Rohana for several years (c. 1029–1040) while attempting to organize a campaign of liberation and unification. He became the king of Rohana after 11 years of Chola rule in Rohana. But he died before he could consolidate his power, and a series of ephemeral aspirants to the throne subsequently appeared and disappeared in Rohana without dislodging the Cholas from the north. Kassapa VI's mysterious death in 1040, however, brought an end to the war. His successor Mahalana-Kitti (1040–1042) tried to lead an unsuccessful revolt against the Cholas.

Vijayabahu I (1039–1110), descended from or at least claimed to be descended from the Sinhalese royal house. He had defeated his most powerful rivals in Rohana and was anxious to take on the Cholas, by the age of seventeen. The crisis in the country left a scattering of turbulent chiefs and intractable rebels whose allegiance, if any, was at best opportunistic which proved a problem to both sides in the conflict, frustrating both the Sinhalese kings and the Cholas. Vijayabahu, from his base in Rohana, faced a similar difficulty; he had to contend with the hostility of local chiefs who regarded him as a greater threat to their independence than the Cholas were.

For that reason, the Cholas occasionally succeeded in recruiting nominal support from rebel chiefs in Rohana, as a result, Vijayabahu had difficulty

consolidating a firm territorial base from which to launch a decisive campaign against the Cholas. On the other hand, the Cholas were unable to eliminate similar opposition to themselves in the north. Gradually the wider conflict developed into a prolonged, back-and-forth struggle of raids and counter-raids, with the forces of Vijayabahu advancing upon Polonnaruva and then falling back to fortresses in Dakkhinadesa and Rohana to withstand retaliatory Chola attacks and sieges.

With time on the side of the insurgent forces, The Chola's determination began to gradually falter. Vijayabahu possessed strategic advantages, even without a unified "national" force behind him. A prolonged war of attrition was of greater benefit to the Sinhalese than to the Cholas. After the accession of Virarajendra Chola (1063–69) to the Chola throne, the Cholas were increasingly on the defensive, not only in Sri Lanka but also in peninsular India, where they were hard-pressed by the attacks of the Chalukyas from the Deccan.

Vijayabahu eventually launched a successful two-pronged attack upon Anuradhapura and Polonnaruva, when he could finally establish a firm base in southern Sri Lanka. Anuradhapura quickly fell and Polonnaruva was captured after a prolonged siege of the isolated Chola forces. Virarajendra Chola was forced to dispatch an expedition from the mainland to recapture the settlements in the north and carry the attack back into Rohana, in order to stave off total defeat.

In the battles that ensued, two powerful Sinhalese chiefs, Ravideva and Cala, crossed over with their men from Vijayabahu's side to the Chola commander. One of Vijayabahu's Tamil commanders, Kurukulattaraiyan, a Tamil Karaiyar chieftain, fell in battle. What had begun as a profitable incursion and occupation was now deteriorating into desperate attempts to retain a foothold in the north. After a further series of indecisive clashes, the occupation finally ended in the withdrawal of the Cholas.

End of occupation

In 1070, when Kulottunga I (1070–1122) came to the Chola throne, after a period of political crisis at the Chola court, he initially concentrated on consolidating his authority in India. His most pressing task was to defend the Chola territories against the inroads of the Western Chalukya Empire. All this meant that the defence of Sri Lanka was given a low priority.

The conquest of the Sinhalese kingdom had been associated with his three immediate predecessors (Rajendra Chola I, Rajendra Chola II, and Virarajendra Chola, all sons of Rajaraja I), no longer seemed to be worthwhile. Kulottunga had less personal prestige involved in the conquest, so he simply terminated it with little attempt to recoup Chola losses.

Vijayabahu attacked and captured Pulatthinagara and drove the Cholas out of the city. Kulottunga sent a large army that engaged Vijayabahu in a pitched battle near Anuradhapura. The Cholas initially succeeded in driving Vijayabahu to seek refuge in Vatagiri but Vijayabahu took Mahanagakula on the Walaweganga and conducted his resistance from there. Pulatthinagara and Anuradhapura fell to Vijayabahu and Mahatittha were soon occupied.Although it would be more dramatic to picture Vijayabahu finally driving the Cholas into the sea, the occupation actually ended in Chola withdrawal after a further series of indecisive clashes.

A. D. 1070, Vijayabahu I succeeded at last where so many of his predecessors had failed and restored the independence of Ceylon; a detailed account of the steps leading to the success of Vijayabahu belongs to the reign of Kulottunga.

Having liberated the whole of Sri Lanka from Chola rule, Vijayabahu crowned himself king of Polonnaruwa in 1076–77.

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Battle of Kandalur Salai

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Kandalur_Salai

Battle of Kandalur salai
Capture of Kandalur salai
Part of Chola Expansions under Rajaraja I (late 10th century CE)
Inscription of Chola emperor Rajaraja from Suchindram, Kanyakumari (15th regnal year)
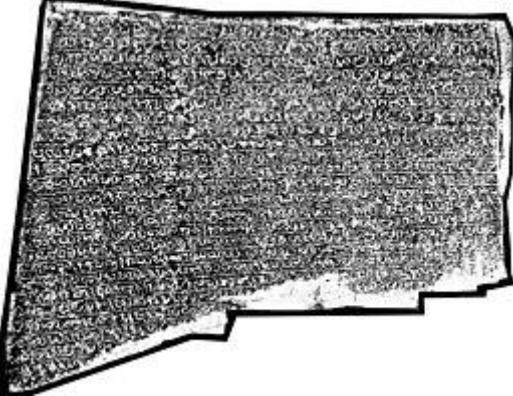
Date	c. 988 CE[1]
Location	Kandalur, south Kerala
Result	Decisive Chola victory

Territorial changes	Fall of Kandalur salai and annexation by Cholas	
Belligerents		
▥ Chola Empire	• Members of Kandalur salai • Chera Kingdom (Mahodayapuram) (?) or ▥ Pandya Kingdom (?)	
Commanders and leaders		
• ▥ Rajaraja Chola I	• Bhaskara Ravi "Manukuladitya" (?)[2]	
Units involved		
• ▥ Chola Army (?) • ▥ Chola Navy	• Chera Army (?) • Chera Navy (?)	
Casualties and losses		
Unknown	Destruction of Kandalur Salai	

The **battle of Kandalur salai** (c. 988 CE), also spelled **Kanthaloor salai,** was a naval engagement of the Cholas under Rajaraja I (985—1014 CE) against the "salai" at Kandalur in south Kerala. The exact location of Kandalur—somewhere south Kerala—is a subject of scholarly debate. The above (988 CE) event is sometimes assumed to be identical with the "conquest of Vizhinjam by a general of Rajaraja [I]", before the "burning of Lanka", described in the Tiruvalangadu Grant/Plates.

The phrase "Kandalur salai kalamarutta" is again used as a title with distinction of three other Chola emperors also (Rajendra, Rajadhiraja and Kulottunga).

Assessment of the title

The "salais" were considered prized possessions as they are claimed to have been sacked by many kings of South India. The character of the salais was re-examined in the 1970 paper 'Kantalur Salai-New Light on Brahmin Expansion in South India' by historian M. G. S. Narayanan.

It is now clear that the salai (or ghatika or kalakam or kalam) was a peculiar institution... A multipurpose training centre for celibate arms-bearing Brahmins (Chathar/Chathirar) in material and spiritual fields (including military training to equip them to serve the chieftain or the king and vedic and sastraic studies)...

—*M. G. S. Narayanan (1970)*

Older assessments

Different views were expressed by early scholars regarding the character of "salai" (such as a naval base (or) a military training centre (or) a cantonment (or) an ammunition depot).

1. Dr. Hultzsch
   - "Built a jewell-like hall at Kandalur" or
   - "Cut the vessel [kalam] in the hall at Kandalur" or
   - "Destroyed ships [kalam] at Kandalur [harbour]"
2. Gopinatha Rao - "destroyed/discontinued/transferred the Brahmin feeding [kalam] at Kandalur Feeding House or Hall [salai] "
3. Desikavinayakam Pillai - "regulation of the Brahmin feeding at Kandalur Feeding House [salai]"
4. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri - "destroyed ships at Kandalur [harbour]"
5. Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai - "discontinued/destroyed the feeding [kalam] of the armed Brahmins [Chathar] at Kandalur".

Location of Kandalur salai

The exact location of Kandalur is a subject of scholarly debate. It is possible the original Kandalur salai was located near the Ay headquarters Vizhinjam and the deity was later shifted to Trivandrum (after the Chola raids of the 10th-11th centuries).

- Original (?) location:— a village around 20 km east of Vizhinjam with a Shiva temple called Kandalur Salai.
- Shifted (?) location:— within the city of Trivandrum (Valiya Salai or Valiassala Temple)

Raid by Rajaraja I (c. 988 CE)

As per historian K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, the capture was the first military achievement of Emperor Rajaraja's reign. The success was summed up in the famous phrase "Kandalur salai kalamarutta", which precedes Rajaraja's name in several of his inscriptions from the 4th regnal year (988 CE) onwards.

- The Kandalur salai belonged to the Ay chief, a vassal of the Pandya king at Madurai, in the mid-860s (865 CE).
- It is possible that at the time of the raid, the salai may have been under control of the Chera Perumal king of Kerala, Bhaskara Ravi.[1] If that was the case, the campaign can be viewed as part of Rajaraja's early battles against the Cheras, Pandyas and the rulers of Sri Lanka.

- However, some historians argue that Kandalur salai, which only later Chola inscriptions (1048 CE) claim to have belonged to the Chera Perumals, may have been held by the Pandyas when it was attacked by Rajaraja I.

Chengam hero stone inscription

A hero stone inscription, dated to the 14th regnal year of Rajaraja I, was unearthed from Chengam, Tiruvannamalai in November, 2009. It supports the view that a military engagement indeed took place at Kandalur. It has a eulogy that talks about Rajaraja I, "who defeated the Nolambas, the Gangas and the Vengai Nadu", "beheading the Malai Alarkal of Kandalur Salai". According to the newspaper report, it also describes that Rajaraja I built a mantapa platform there, that he [Rajaraja I] split in two a naval vessel belonging to the Chera king and that he destroyed a number of "boats".

References to Kandalur salai

Corrections by M. G. S. Narayanan on K. A. Nilakanta Sastri are employed.

- 865 CE — Huzur Office/Parthivapuram Plates of Ay chieftain Karunantatakkan Srivallabha (a vassal of the Pandya king Srimara Srivallabha).
- 988 CE — first Chola reference to the fall of Kandalur salai ("Kandalur salai kalamarutta").
- 1018-19 CE — Chola (Rajadhiraja and Rajendra) campaigns in Kerala.
  "...confined the undaunted king of Venatu [back] to Che[ra]natu [from the Ay country].... and put on a fresh garland of Vanchi after capturing Kantalur Salai while the strong Villavan [the Chera king] hid himself in terror inside the jungle..."

- 1048 CE – Velur and Tiruppangili inscriptions – Kandalur salai is mentioned as 'Cheralan Velaikkelu Kantalur Chalai'.
- *Kalingattupparani* (III-21) mentions Kulottunga Chola's victory of over the Bow Emblem and the Chola capture of Kantalur Salai.
- c. 1102 — c.1118 CE – Jatavarman Parakrama Pandya mentions the capture of Kantalur Salai (for his Chola overlord Vikrama Chola).

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Chola Navy
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chola_Navy

The **Chola Navy** was composed of ships used for transporting the land army overseas. The Cholas did not have a standing navy in the modern sense. The maritime force of Cholas was formed by using ships used for trade, as they did not have a dedicated ship for naval combat.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Chola Navy</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Founded</td><td>300 BC</td></tr>
<tr><td>Disbanded</td><td>1280 AD</td></tr>
<tr><td>Country</td><td>Chola Empire</td></tr>
<tr><td>Allegiance</td><td>Chola Dynasty</td></tr>
<tr><td>Type</td><td>Naval Force</td></tr>
<tr><td>Part of</td><td>Chola military</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Commanders</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ceremonial chief</td><td>Chola Emperor (Chakravarthy) – notably, Rajaraja I and Rajendra I</td></tr>
</table>

History

Imperial Chola period (848–1070 CE)

Rajaraja I and Rajendra I

Chola territorial extent

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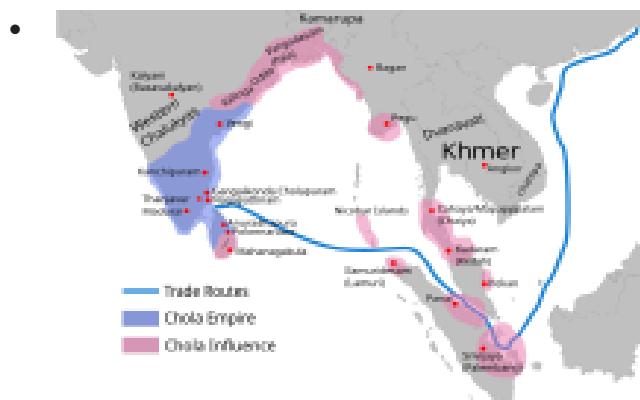
c.1030 CE (under Rajendra I)

-

c.1055 CE (under Rajendra II)

c.1065 CE (under Virarajendra Chola)

Under Rajaraja Chola I and his son Rajendra Chola I, the dynasty became a military, economic and cultural power in Asia. Rajaraja Chola conquered peninsular South India, annexed parts of Sri Lanka and occupied the islands of the northernmost atolls of the Maldives. Rajendra Chola sent a victorious expedition to North India that touched the river Ganges and defeated the Pala ruler of Pataliputra, Mahipala. He also raided kingdoms of Maritime Southeast Asia.

An inscription from Sirkazhi, dated 1187 CE, mentions a naval officer called Araiyan Kadalkolamitantaan alias Amarakon Pallavaraiyan. He is mentioned as the *Tandalnayagam* of the *Karaippadaiyilaar*. The term *Karaippadaiyilaar* means "forces or army of the seashore" and the title *Tandalnayagam* is similar to *Dandanayaka* and means "commander of the forces". The title *Kadalkolamitantaan* means "one who floated while the sea was engulfed".

Trade, commerce, and diplomacy

The Cholas excelled in foreign trade and maritime activity, extending their influence overseas to China and Southeast Asia. A fragmentary Tamil inscription found in Sumatra cites the name of a merchant guild *Nanadesa Tisaiyayirattu Ainnutruvar* (literally, "the five hundred from the four countries and the thousand directions"), a famous merchant guild in the Chola country. The inscription is dated 1088, indicating that there was an active overseas trade during the Chola period.

Towards the end of the 9th century, southern India had developed extensive maritime and commercial activity, especially with the Chinese and Arabs. The Cholas, having parts of both the west and the east coasts of peninsular India, were at the forefront of these ventures. The Tang dynasty of China, the Srivijaya empire in the Malayan archipelago under the Sailendras, and the Abbasid caliphate at Baghdad were the main trading partners.

Cooperation with the Chinese

Chinese Song Dynasty reports record that an embassy from *Chulian* (Chola) reached the Chinese court in the year 1077, and that

the king of the Chulien at the time was called *Ti-hua-kia-lo*. It is possible that these syllables denote "Deva Kulo[tunga]" (Kulothunga Chola I). This embassy was a trading venture and was highly profitable to the visitors, who returned with "81,800 strings of copper coins in exchange for articles of tributes, including glass articles, and spices".

Vessels and weapons

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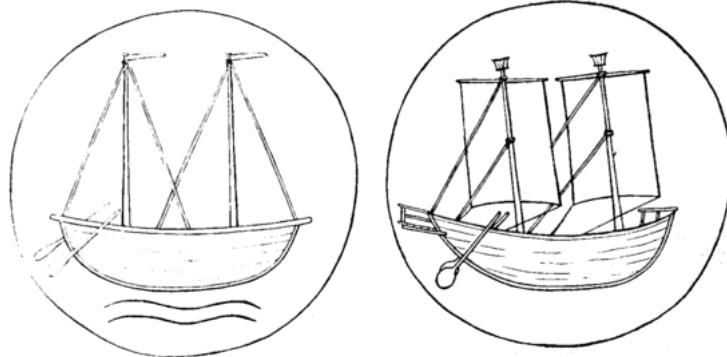
Left: Kurumbas or Pallava coin of the Coromandel coast; showing a two-masted ship like the modern coasting vessel or *d'honi*, Right: Andhra coin from Eastern Indian coast, showing a two-masted ship, ca. 1st–3rd century CE.

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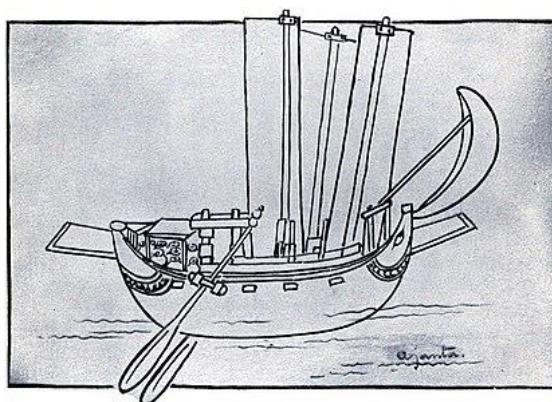
Sketch of a ship based on a mural in Ajanta Caves, ca. 6th century.

Very little information about Chola ships has survived. Because of this, the technique used for naval battles and how the battles were fought is unknown. R.C. Majumdar argues that the naval battles fought by Chola were land battles fought on ships, and the ships used were transports used for transporting the army. It is also possible that the Cholas did not fight naval battles—the battles were fought on land. Despite their maritime connection, the Cholas left no traces of maritime or ship-related iconography, unlike the earlier Sathavahanas, Salankayanas, Kurumbas, and Pallavas.

Rajendra Chola's inscriptions mentioned the term *kalam*, which is a usual term for a ship. A Tamil inscription from Barus, Sumatra, dated 1088 CE mentioned *marakkalam* (timber ship). The size of the ship and where it was constructed are unknown. A Tamil inscription of about 1200/1256 CE from Krishnapattinam, on the Andhra coast, mentioned several sea vessels: There are *marakkalam*, *toni*, *kalavam*, *vedi*, and *padavu*. Their size is not recorded, Y. Subbarayalu thinks that the *marakkalam* may have been the biggest since it was mentioned first, and it may be about 4 times bigger than *padavu* since it was charged 4 times the charge on *padavu*. The *Toni* (also pronounced as *dhony*) was charged the same amount as *marakkalam*, but according to Subbarayalu they may be smaller than *marakkalam* in size. The *dhony* continued operating in the 19th century, plying the routes between Sri Lanka and Madras (Chennai). The *dhony* was 70 feet (21.34 m) long, 20 feet (6.10 m) wide, 12 feet (3.66 m) deep, with no decks, and had one mast.

Campaigns

Chola military campaigns late 10th and early 11th centuries were plundering raids. This is done to ensure the entry of spoils, which can be in the form of livestock, jewellery, and other forms of property.

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Chola Military

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chola_military

Chola Military		
சோழர் படை		
Founded	300 BC	
Disbanded	1280 AD	
Headquarters	• Thanjavur, Chola Empire • Gangaikonda Cholapuram, Chola Empire	
Related articles		
History	Wars	
	• Annexation of Kalinga and Bengal, 1019–1024	

- Chola–Chalukya wars
- Pandyan Civil War (1169–1177)
- Pallava–Chalukya Conflict
- Govinda III's Southern Campaign

Invasions
- Conquest of Anuradhapura, 993
- Conquest of Pegu, 1023-1025
- Chola conquest of the Nicobar island, 1023-1025
- Invasion of Srivijaya, 1025
- Chola invasion of Malaysia, 1028
- Invasion of Kadaram, 1068
- Invasion of Kalinga, 1097
- Invasion of Kalinga, 1110

Battles
- Battle of Vijuthapura(161 or 162 BC)
- Battle of Venni (130 CE)
- Battle of Thirupurambiyam (879 CE)
- Battle of Takkolam (949 CE)
- Battle of Kandalur Salai (988 CE)
- Battle of Donur (1007 CE)
- Battle of Koppam (1054 CE)
- Battle of Kudal-Sangamam (1062 CE)
- Battle of Vijayawada (1068)
- Battle of Nettur (1188 CE)

The **Chola military** (Tamil: சோழர் படை) was the combined armed forces of the Chola Empire organized during two separate Tamil golden ages, the Sangam Period and the Medieval Era. The Chola military fought dozens of wars, and it also underwent numerous changes in structure, organization, equipment and tactics, while conserving a core of lasting Tamil traditions.

Sangam period (300 BC – 300 AD)

It has not been possible to assemble an internal chronology of the Sangam works and pinpoint when and how the early Chola military was formed.

Karikala Chola

Karikala Chola stands pre-eminent amongst all those mentioned in *Pattinappaalai*. 'Karikala' means 'elephant feller' or 'charred leg', which is assumed to be a reference to an accident by fire that befell the prince early in his life. *Pattinappaalai* describes this accident and the enterprising way in which the prince escaped and established himself on the Chola throne. *Pattinappalai* is a poem on the then Chola capital Kaveripattinam and describes the numerous battles Karikala fought against the Cheras and Pandyas, including the famous Battle of

[Venni](#) where the Chola army defeated a confederacy of (about) a dozen rulers headed by Chera and Pandya kings. Following the battle, the Chera king was disgraced (received a wound on his back) and committed suicide. Karikala thus broke the confederacy that was formed against him, conquered the Chera and Pandya kingdoms, and established Chola hegemony over Tamilakam. After the Battle of Venni, Karikala defeated the confederacy of nine minor chieftains in the Battle of Vakaipparandalai. He also invaded Sri Lanka and took away, among other things, 12,000 Sinhalese men to work as slaves in the construction of the [Kallanai Dam](#).

The poet Kovur Kilar mentions a protracted civil war between two Chola chieftains [Nalankilli](#) and [Nedunkilli](#). Nedunkilli isolated himself in a fort in Avur, which was being besieged by Mavalattan, Nalankilli's younger brother. The poet chided Nedunkilli to come out and fight like a man instead of causing untold misery to the people of the city. In another poem, the poet begs both the princes to give up the civil war as whoever wins, the loser will be a Chola.

Kalavali by Poygayar mentions the Chola King [Kocengannan](#) and his battle with the Chera king Kanaikkal Irumporai. The Chera was taken prisoner and Poygayar, who was a friend of the Chera, sang a poem praising the Chola King Kochchenganan in 40 stanzas. The Chola king, pleased with the work, released the Chera. Kalavali describes the battle fought at Kalumalam, near the Chera capital. [Kocengannan](#) is one of the 63 [nayanars](#). Kocengannan became the subject of many instances in later times and is portrayed as a pious [Siva](#) devotee who built many fine temples for Siva along the banks of the river [Kaveri](#).

Medieval Chola army

The Chola dynasty faded into darkness after c. 300 CE. During this period, the Cholas lost their sovereignty in Tamilakam and held on to their old capital city of [Urayur](#) by serving as a vassal state under the [Kalabhra](#) and [Pallava](#) dynasties and by making use of the opportunity during a war between the Pandyas and Pallavas, [Vijayalaya Chola](#) rose out of obscurity and captured Thanjavur and re-established the Chola dynasty. In 852 CE, Vijayalaya Chola declared war on the Pandyas and defeated them and at the same time, the Cholas became so powerful that the Pallavas were also wiped out from the Thanjavur region at a later stage. The Medieval Chola Empire traced their ancestry to the ancient Tamil King, [Karikala](#), making him the dynasty's ancestral father.

Organization and administration

Cholas recruited military personnel of four types: soldiers of hereditary military families, soldiers raised from various tribes, personnel provided by various tradesmen and merchants, and mercenaries.[3]

In addition to the divisions, there were the *Nadapu*—the commissariat and *Payanam*—the admiralty and logistics. The addition to these, bureaucratic reforms revolutionized the Chola Army, resulting in victories on a massive scale.

Famous generals

Rajendra I at battle in Karnataka.

There were hundreds of generals in the Medieval Chola Army, some notable commanders include:

- Senathipathi Araiyan Rajarajan (11th century)
- Younger brother of Rajendra Chola I and highest ranking general of the Chola Army during their victories against the Western Chalukya dynasty, Somavamsi dynasty, the Pala Kingdom, and the Kamboja Pala dynasty
- Senathipathi Abrameya Pallavan, was the commander-in-chief of Rajaraja Chola.
- He was the commander in kandalur salai battle 988CE and also in the Kudamalai battle in 994 CE where Prince Rajendra led the forces.
- Senathipathi Aditha Karikalan (10th Century)
- Commander of Northern Troops, He led the army against Pandyas and defeated the Pandya king Veerapandyan at the Battle of Chevur.
- Senathipathi Vallavaraiyan Vandiyadevan (10th–11th century)
- Commander of the Sri Lanka Front Army of Rajaraja l and Rajendra I during the Chola conquest of Anuradhapura
- Senathipathi Karunakara Tondaiman (Late 11th century)
- Famous general during the reign of Kulottunga Chola I who defeated the Kalinga armies of King Anantavarman and went on to plunder Lanka
- The Karunakara Pillaiyar temple in the Jaffna peninsula was built after him. The village, Thondaimanaru, in Ceylon, was also named after him
- Senathipathi Naralokaviran (Late 11th century)
- General during the reign of Kulottunga Chola I and his successor Vikrama Chola who led many Chola campaigns in the deep south and distinguished himself in the Pandya Wars
- Senathipathi Paluvettaraiyar Maravan Kandanar (Late 10th century)

- An important general during the reign of [Parantaka Chola II](#) who strengthened the Pazhuvettaraiyar regiment that was actively deployed during the [Chola conquest of Anuradhapura](#)
- Thalapathi Thiruchitrambalamudaiyan Perumanambi (Late 12th century)
- Defeated Polonnaruwa Army generals [Lankapura Dandanatha](#) and Jagad Vijaya in battle and successfully re-conquered the Pandyan Kingdom on behalf of [Rajadhiraja Chola II](#) during the [Pandyan Civil War (1169–1177)](#)
- Anipathi Annan Pallavarayan (Late 12th century)
- Invaded Polonnaruwa and destroyed parakramabahu's preparations for the invasion of Chola Nadu and provided support for Sinhalese Prince Sri Vallabha, nephew of Parakramabahu and a rival claimant to the Polonnaruwa throne

Regiments

Horse-drawn chariots used by the Chola Army

Elephants used in battle

Chola inscriptions mention numerous regiments by specific names. [Rajaraja Chola I](#) created a powerful standing army and a considerable navy, which achieved even greater success under his son [Rajendra Chola I](#). The prominence given to the army from the conquest of the [Pandyas](#) down to the last year of the king's reign is significant and shows the spirit with which the king treated his soldiers. Rajaraja gave his army its due share in the glory derived from his extensive conquests. The army was composed chiefly of [Kaikolars](#) (Weavers), which were royal troops receiving regular payments from the treasury (e.g. *Arul mozhideva-terinda-kaikola padai*; in this, *arulmozhideva* is the king's name, *terinda* means well known, and *padai* means regime). Kaikolars were also a part-time weavers who formed battalions during wartime.

Some of the well-known Kaikola battalions were:

- Singalantaka-terinda-Kaikkolar
- Virachozha-terinja-Kaikkolar
- Kodandarama-terinja-Kaikkolar
- Danatonga-terinja-Kaikkolar
- Parantaka-terinja-Kaikkolar
- Muthuvalpetra-Kaikkolar
- Samarakesarit-terinja-Kaikkolar
- Vikramasingat-terinja-Kaikkolar
- Adityapanma-terinda-Kaikkolar
- Karikala-chozha-terinja-Kaikkolar
- Arulmozhideva-terinja-Kaikkolar
- Parttivasekarat-terinja-Kaikkolar
- Gandaraditta-terinja-Kaikkolar
- Madurantaka-terinja-Kaikkolar

Kodandarama-terinja-Kaikkolar is named after [Aditya Chola I](#) who had another name Kodandarama. Smarakesarit-terinja-Kaikkolar and Vikramasingat-terinja-Kaikkolar derived their names from possible titles of [Parantaka Chola I](#). Gandaraditta-terinja-Kaikkolar must have been the name of a regiment named after king [Gandaraditya Chola](#), the father of [Uttama Chola](#). Singalantaka-terinda-Kaikkolar, a regiment named after Singalantaka i.e. Parantaka Chola I. Danatunga-terinja-Kaikkolar (regiment or group). The early writing of the record and the surname Danatunga of Parantaka I suggest its assignment to his reign. Muthuvalpetra, meaning the "recipient of the pearl ornamented sword" in Tamil seems to indicate some special honour or rank conferred on the regiment by the king. Arulmozhideva-terinja-Kaikkolar is named after [Raja Raja Chola I](#).

The following regiments are mentioned in the [Tanjavur](#) inscriptions:

- Uttama- Chola-terinda-Andalagattalar
- Perundanattu Anaiyatkal — Elephant corps.
- Pandita-Chola-Terinda-villigal — Archers
- Nigarili- Chola terinda-Udanilai-Kudiraichchevagar — Cavalry
- Mummadi- Chola-terinda-Anaippagar — Elephant corps
- Vira- Chola-Anukkar
- Parantaka-Kongavalar — Light Infantry
- Mummadi- Chola-terinda-parivarattar
- Keralantaka-terinda-parivarattar
- Mulaparivara-vitteru alias Jananatha-terinda-parivarattar

- Singalantaka-terinda-parivarattar
- Sirudanattu Vadugakkalavar
- Valangai-Parambadaigalilar
- Sirudanattu-Valangai-Velaikkarappadaigal
- Aragiya- Chola-terinda-Valangai-Velaikkarar
- Aridurgalanghana-terinda-Valangai-Velaikkarar
- Chandaparakrama-terinda-Valangai-Velaikkarar
- Ilaiya-Rajaraja-terinda-Valangai-Velaikkarar
- Kshatriyasikhamani-terinda-Valangai-Velaikkarar
- Murtavikramabharana-terinda-Valangai-Velaikkarar
- Rajakanthirava-terinda-Valangai-Velaikkarar
- Rajaraja-terinda-Valangai-Velaikkarar
- Rajavinoda-terinda-Valangai-Velaikkarar
- Ranamukha-Bhima-terinda-Valangai-Velaikkarar
- Vikramabharana-terinda-Valangai-Velaikkarar
- Keralantaka-vasal-tirumeykappar
- Anukka-vasal-tirumeykappar — Personal bodyguards
- Parivarameykappargal — Personal bodyguards
- Palavagai-Parampadaigalilar
- Perundanattu-Valangai-Velaikkarappadaigal

Velaikkarappadaigal or *Velaikkarar* is the equivalent of "Guards regiment" or "King's Regiment"—a royal suffix given in honour of their loyalty and bravery. Some historians like Stein also propose that they were drawn from the civilian population during wartime, suggesting they were more like the National Guard. They are mentioned in the Mahavamsa; according to that account, the Sinhalese kingdom tried to use them as mercenaries against the Chola empire. They were later silenced and decommissioned when they refused and rebelled.

There are almost seventy such regiments that have been found in these inscriptions. In most of the foregoing names, the first portion appears to be the surnames or titles of the king himself or that of his son. That these regiments were called after the king or his son shows the attachment that the Chola king bore towards his army.

It may not be unreasonable to suppose that these royal names were prefixed to the designations of these regiments after they had distinguished themselves in some engagement or other. It is worthy of note that there are elephant troops, cavalry and foot soldiers among these regiments.

Top officers took various titles after the different kings such as *Rajaraja Chola Brahmarajan*, *Rajarajakesari Muvendavelar*, *Jayamkondachola*

Villuparaiyar, Uttamachola Muvendavelar, Manukula Muvendavelar, Nittavinotha Muvendavelar, Atirajendra Muvendavelar, Mummudi chola pallavaraiyar, and *Viranarayanan Muvendavelan*.

Chola troops in battle

Garrisons

The military administration system of the Chola dynasty in ancient India was a meticulously planned and executed strategy to ensure the security and stability of their vast empire. The army was stationed throughout the country in the form of local garrisons and cantonments, commonly known as "Kadagams." These garrisons were established in strategic locations to provide immediate security to the surrounding regions. They also served as administrative centres for the collection of taxes, maintenance of law and order, and the dispensation of justice.

The Cholas' military administration system extended beyond their borders, with garrisons stationed in the territories they had conquered. These garrisons were responsible for the collection of taxes and the maintenance of law and order in these regions. They also acted as a deterrent against any rebellion or uprising, thereby ensuring the continued subjugation of the conquered territories.

The Cholas' military administration system was not limited to the establishment of garrisons and cantonments. They also maintained a well-trained and well-equipped army that was ready to respond to any threat to the empire's security. The Cholas also had a navy that patrolled the seas around their empire, protecting their trade routes and preventing piracy.

Overall, the Cholas' military administration system was a testament to their foresight and strategic planning. It provided security and stability to their empire, ensuring its continued prosperity and longevity. Following the Chola conquest of Anuradhapura, Senathipathi of the Sri Lanka Front Army of Rajaraja I and Rajendra I, Vallavaraiyan Vandiyadevan, garrisoned the city of Polonnaruwa to administer control over the island and deter any attempt of reconquest by the Sinhalese armies. After the troubles in the Pandya country, Kulothunga Chola

I stationed his army in several military colonies along the main route to Pandya from Chola lands. One such colony was found at Kottaru and another at Madavilagam near South Arcot district in Tamil Nadu.

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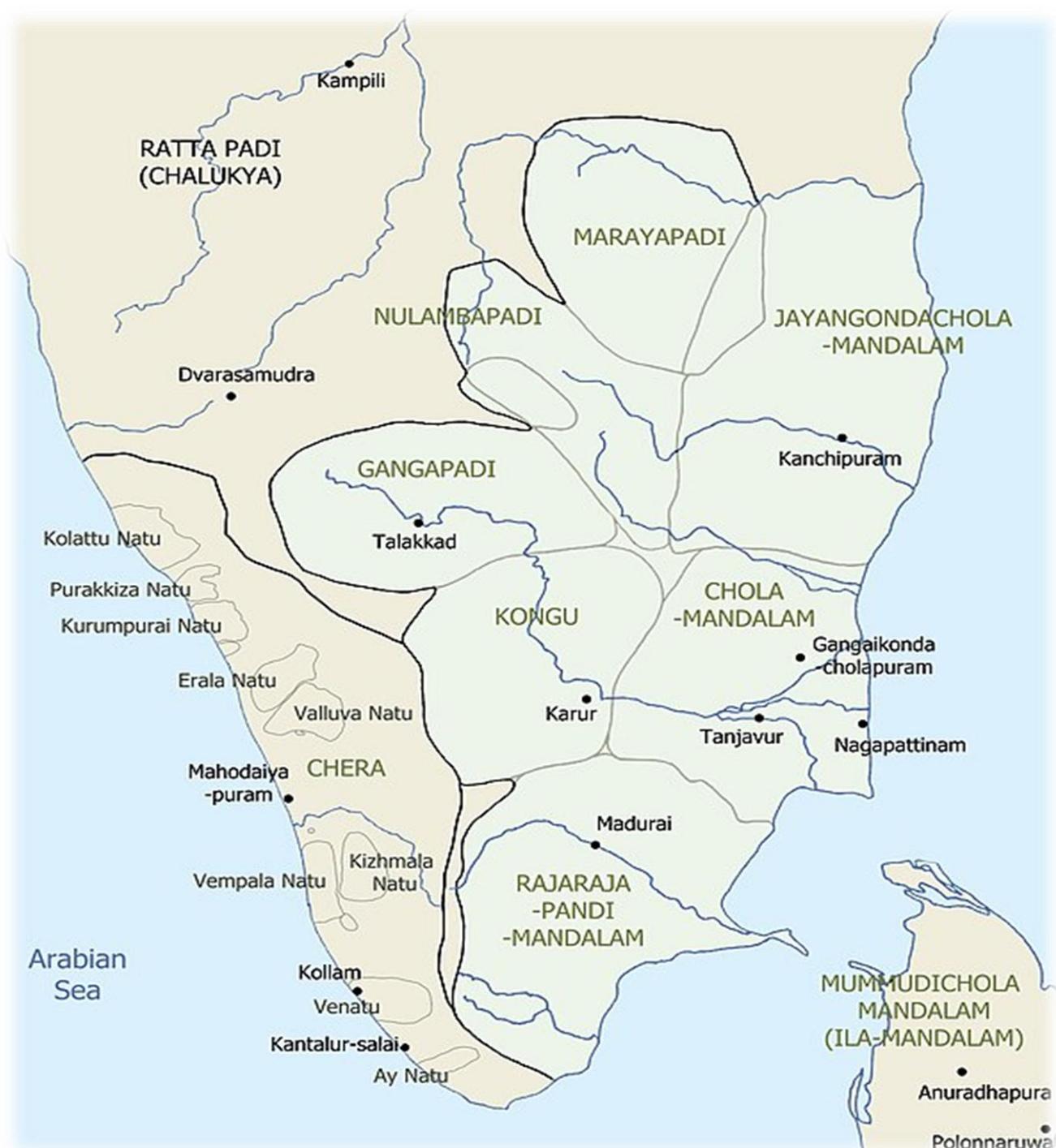
The mandalams of the Chola empire, early 12th century CE

Gold Gadyana coin of emperor **Rajaraja I** (985–1014). Uncertain Tamil Nadu mint. Legend "Chola, conqueror of the Gangas" in Tamil, seated tiger with two fish.

The city of Thanjavur

Chola princes Aditha Karikalan and Arulmozhi Varman meeting their guru

Rajendra I proclaimed as Emperor by Shiva and Shakthi

Sculpture of Kulottunga I

Airavatesvara Temple Built
by **Rajaraja II**.

Gangaikonda Cholapuram, the
capital of the Chola Empire, built
from 1023 to 1027 by **Rajendra I**.

**Aerial view of the Venkatesa Perumal Temple in Thirumukkudal
(near Kanchipuram), a temple built by Virarajendra in 1069.
The temple also included a hospital and Vedic schools.**

Water Tank of the Nataraja Temple in Chidambaram.

Arts & Architecture

Architecture

Gangaikonda Cholapuram, the capital of the Chola Empire, built from 1023 to 1027 by Rajendra I

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Brihadisvara Temple, built in 1010 by Rajaraja I

The Cholas continued the temple-building traditions of the Pallava dynasty and contributed significantly to the Dravidian temple design. They built a number of Shiva temples along the banks of the Kaveri river. The template for these and future temples was formulated by Aditya I and Parantaka. The Chola temple architecture has been appreciated for its magnificence and delicate workmanship, ostensibly following the rich traditions of the Pallava dynasty. Architectural historian James Fergusson says "the Chola artists conceived like giants and finished like jewelers". A new development in Chola art that characterised the Dravidian architecture in later times was the addition of a huge gateway called *gopuram* to the enclosure of the temple, which had been developed under the Pandya dynasty. The Chola school of art spread to Southeast Asia, and influenced the architecture and art of Southeast Asia.

Temple building received great impetus from the conquests and the genius of Rajaraja Chola and his son Rajendra Chola I. The temples at Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram display the maturity and grandeur to which the Chola architecture had evolved. The Shiva temple of Thanjavur, which was completed around 1009, idisplays the material achievements of Rajaraja's reign, being the largest and tallest of all Indian temples of its time. The temple of Gangaikondacholisvaram at

Gangaikondacholapuram, which was designed by Rajendra Chola, was intended to excel its predecessor. It was completed around 1030 in the same style. The greater elaboration in its appearance attests to the more affluent state of the Chola empire under Rajendra. The Brihadisvara Temple, the temple of Gangaikondacholisvaram and the Airavatesvara Temple at Darasuram were declared World Heritage Sites by UNESCO, and are referred to as the Great Living Chola Temples.

The Chola period is also noted for its sculptures and bronzes. Specimens in museums around the world and in temples of South India include figures of Shiva in various forms, such as Vishnu and his consort Lakshmi, and the Shaivite saints. These works generally conform to the iconographic conventions established by long tradition but the sculptors of the 11th and the 12th centuries worked with great freedom to achieve a classic grace and grandeur. The best example of this can be seen in the form of Nataraja the Divine Dancer.

Literature

Kambar often recited poems at the Kamba Ramyanam Mandapam

Literature flourished in the Chola Empire. The poet Kambar was active during the reign of Kulothunga III. Kambar's epic poem *Ramavataram* (also referred to as *Kambaramayanam*) is a classic of Tamil literature; though the author states he followed Valmiki's *Ramayana*, it is generally accepted his work is not a simple translation or adaptation of the Sanskrit epic. Kambar's work describes the colour and landscape of his own time; his description of Kosala is an idealised account of the features of Chola country.

Jayamkondar's *Kalingattuparani* is an example of narrative poetry that draws a clear boundary between history and fictitious conventions. This poem describes events during Kulothunga's war in Kalinga, and depicts the pomp and circumstance of war, and the gruesome details of the field. The Tamil poet Ottakuttan was a contemporary of Kulottunga I and served at the courts of three of Kulothunga's successors. Ottakuttan wrote *Kulothunga Cholan Ula*, a poem extolling the virtues of the Chola king.

Nannul is a Chola-era work on Tamil grammar. It discusses all five branches of grammar and, according to Berthold Spuler, is still relevant and is one of the most-distinguished normative grammars of literary Tamil.

The Telugu Choda period was significant for the development of Telugu literature under the patronage of the rulers. In this era, great Telugu poets Tikkana, Ketana, Marana and Somana were active. Tikkana Somayaji wrote *Nirvachanottara Ramayanamu* and *Andhra Mahabharatamu*. Abhinava Dandi Ketana wrote *Dasakumaracharitramu*, *Vijnaneswaramu*, and *Andhra Bhashabhushanamu*. Marana wrote *Markandeya Purana* in Telugu. Somana wrote *Basava Purana*. Tikkana is one of the *kavitrayam* who translated *Mahabharata* into Telugu.

Of the period's devotional literature, the arrangement of the Shaivite canon into eleven books was the work of Nambi Andar Nambi, who lived close to the end of the 10th century. Relatively few Vaishnavite works were composed during the Later Chola period, possibly because of the rulers' apparent animosity towards them.

Religion

Bronze Chola Statue of *Nataraja* at the
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

In general, Cholas were followers of Hinduism. While the Cholas built their largest and most-important temple dedicated to Shiva, it is uncertain whether they were followers of Shaivism only or that they were not favourably disposed to other faiths. The second Chola king Aditya I (871–903) built temples for Shiva and Vishnu. Inscriptions of 890 refer to his contributions to the construction Ranganatha Temple at Srirangapatnam in the Western Gangas, who were both his feudatories and had connections by marriage with him. He also said the

great temples of Shiva and Ranganatha temple were to be the *Kuladhanam* of the Chola emperors.

Parantaka II was a devotee of the reclining Vishnu (Vadivu Azhagiya Nambi) at Anbil the outskirts of Tiruchy, to whom he gave numerous gifts and embellishments. He prayed before Vishnu before his embarking on a war to regain territories in and around Kanchi and Arcot from the waning Rashtrakutas, and leading expeditions against Madurai and Ilam (Sri Lanka). Parantaka I and Parantaka Chola II endowed and built temples for Shiva and Vishnu. Rajaraja Chola I patronised Buddhists and provided for the construction of the Chudamani Vihara, a Buddhist monastery in Nagapattinam, at the request of Sri Chulamanivarman, the Srivijaya Sailendra king.

During the period of the Later Cholas, there were supposed instances of intolerance towards Vaishnavites especially towards their acharya Ramanuja. A Chola sovereign called Krimikanta Chola is said to have persecuted Ramanuja. Some scholars identify Kulothunga Chola II with Krimikanta Chola or worm-necked Chola, who is so-called because he is said to have suffered from cancer of the throat or neck. The latter finds mention in the vaishnava Guruparampara and is said to have been a strong opponent of the Vaishnavas. The 17th-century work *Parpannamritam* refers to a Chola king called Krimikanta who is said to have removed the Govindaraja idol from the Chidambaram Nataraja temple. According to temple records of the Srirangam temple, however, Kulottunga Chola II was the son of Krimikanta Chola. The former, unlike his father, is said to have been a repentant son who supported Vaishnavism.

Ramanuja is said to have made Kulottunga II a disciple of his nephew Dasarathi. The king then granted the management of Ranganathaswamy temple to Dasarathi and his descendants as per the wish of Ramanuja. Historian Nilakanta Sastri identifies Krimikanta Chola with Athirajendra Chola or Virarajendra Chola, with whom the main Vijayalaya Chola line ended. An inscription from 1160 states the custodians of Shiva temples who had social intercourse with Vaishnavites would forfeit their property. This is a direction to the Shaivite community by its religious heads rather than a diktat by a Chola emperor. While Chola kings built their largest temples for Shiva, and emperors like Rajaraja Chola I held titles like *Sivapadasekharan*, in none of their inscriptions did the Chola emperors proclaim their clan solely followed Shaivism or that Shaivism was the state religion during their rule.

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Family Tree

Medieval Cholas

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Vijayalaya
848–881
   |
Aditya I
871–907
   |
Parantaka I
907–954
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- Rajaditya

- Gandaraditya 950–957
  - Uttama 971–987

- Arinjaya 956–957
  - Parantaka II 957–970
    - Aditya II
    - Raja Raja I 985–1014
      - Rajendra I 1012–1044
        - Rajadhiraja I 1018–1054
        - Rajendra II 1051–1063
        - Virarajendra 1063–1070
          - Athirajendra 1067–1070
    - Kundavai
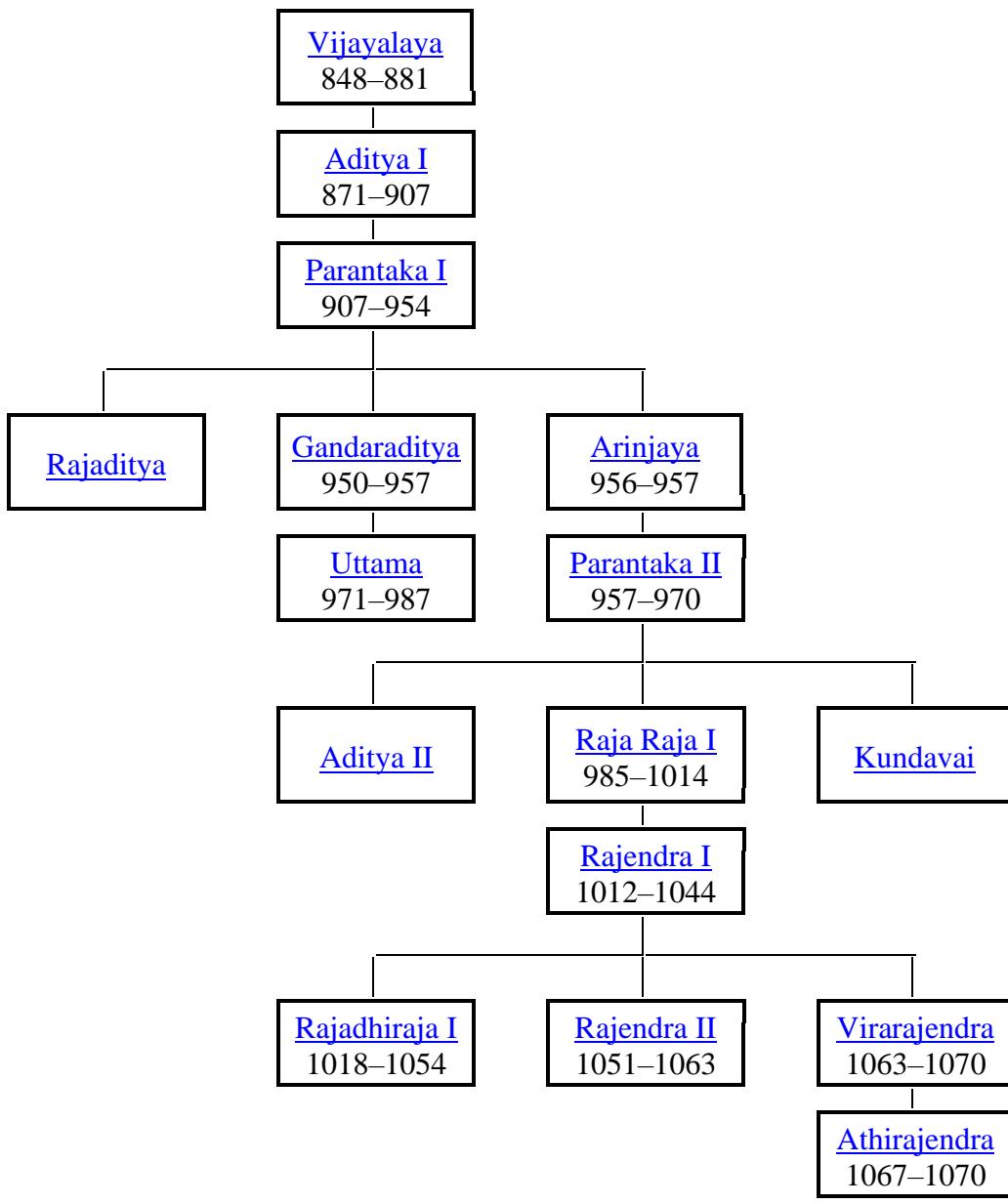
Emperors

Ruler		Reign	Notes
Vijayalaya Chola		848–870	Founder of the Chola empire and descendant of the Early Cholas.
Aditya I		870–907	
Parantaka I		907–955	
Gandaraditya		955–957	Ruled jointly.
Arinjaya		956–957	
Parantaka II		957–970	
Uttama		970–985	
Rajaraja I the Great		985–1014	

Rajendra I		1014–1044	
Rajadhiraja I		1044–1054	
Rajendra II		1054–1063	
Virarajendra		1063–1070	
Athirajendra		1070	Left no heirs.
Kulothunga I		1070–1122	Son of Amangai Devi Chola, daughter of Rajendra I, and Rajaraja Narendra, ruler of Eastern Chalukya dynasty. Kolothunga's reign started the period which was known as *Chalukya-Chola dynasty or simply Later Cholas*.
Vikrama		1122–1135	
Kulothunga II		1135–1150	Grandson of the previous.

Rajaraja II		1150–1173	
Rajadhiraja II		1173–1178	Grandson of king Virarajendra Chola.
Kulothunga III		1178–1218	
Rajaraja III		1218–1256	
Rajendra III		1256–1279	Last Chola ruler, defeated by the Maravarman Kulasekara Pandyan I of the Pandya dynasty. After the war, the remaining Chola royal bloods were reduced to the state of being chieftains by the Pandyan forces.